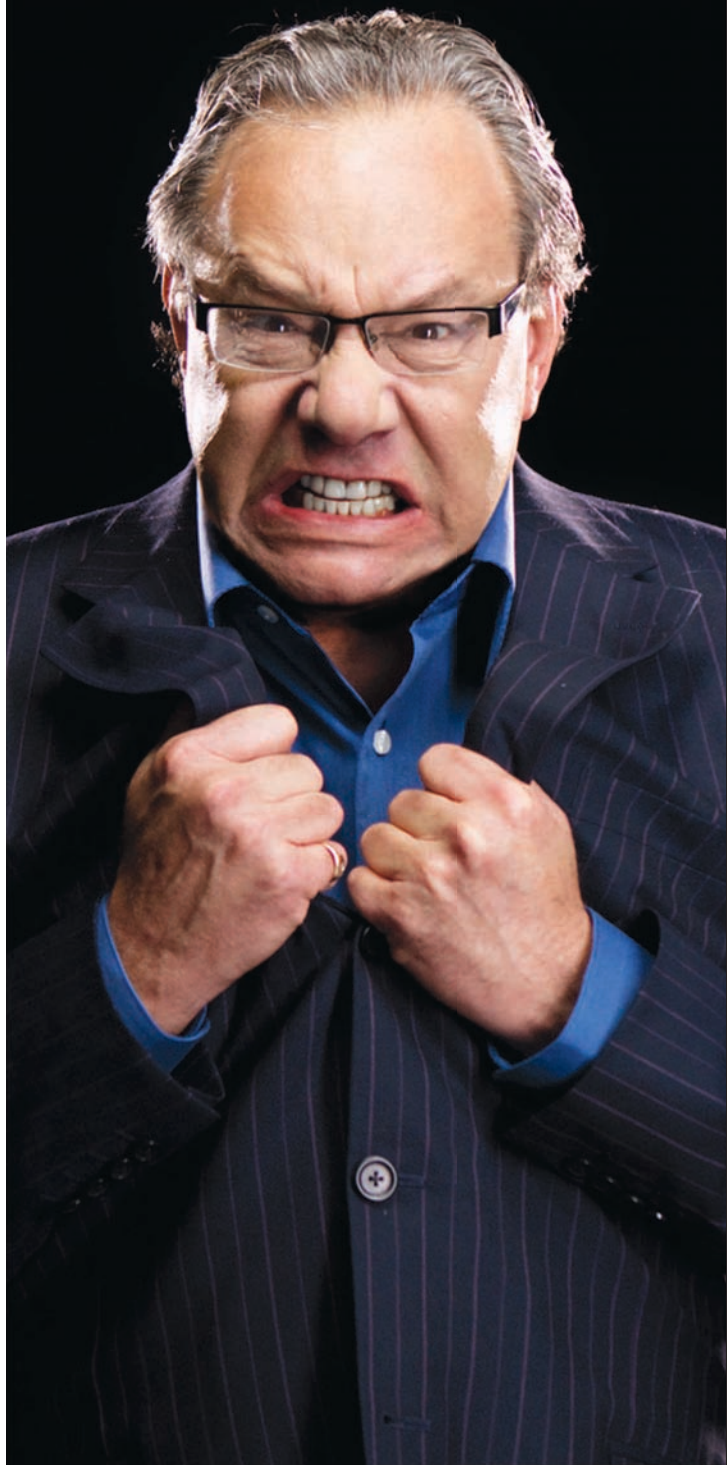


BEHOLD OLD YELLER

Lewis Black brings
'The Rant is Due' tour
to the Hult



America's favorite hot-tempered comedian and social critic Lewis Black returns to Eugene Oct. 30, and he's madder than ever, in a clever, "LMFAO" sort of way. *EW* caught up with Black to yell about everything from voter suppression and Oregon's efforts to legalize recreational marijuana to Ebola and the downfalls of the 21st century. Under Black's flame, no issue, virus, politician or village idiot walks away unscathed.

You recently paired up with the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) for "F* Voter Suppression." Why did you get involved with this particular issue and what's it about?**

Because it's just common sense. It's a right. I don't think it's a political issue. It's not a Democrat or Republican issue. ... We're going to argue this again and I'm tired of the argument. Most of my life has been spent arguing the same things over and over and over again. There's certain things that just need to stop being argued and one is you don't make it harder for people to vote, you make it easier for people to vote. No one is trying to steal an election. ... I don't know what goes on in other parts of the country, but for years, I walk into a place, I give them my name, they check the box off. You can't walk in as an imaginary person ... In the end, Americans don't have that much energy.

In your 2013 "Old Yeller" comedy special, you say that "the 21st century blows chunks." What is the worst part of the 21st century?

The worst part is it's just like the 20th century all over again, only this time it's in high definition. The life that was presented to me in "Tomorrowland" when I was 10 and what I was told was coming is not the flying-cars type of life where all of this kind of technology would make it easier and bring us closer together and be timesaving. In a sense, we've created this environment where no time seems to be being saved and people are working harder and more hours and having to take another job, or both parents have to work, plus we add on the childrearing, which has become a full-time job.

It's just not what it was cracked up to be. I would have liked to see us control the weather as opposed to being able to make a phone call without having a cord. I mean, I just think everything we ended up doing technologically is not the choice I would have made. I would like to be able to say, "OK, here's what the weather is going to be like." Then we can vote on it.

What's the best?

There's another generation coming along — you pay attention to them. Instead of paying lip service to

them and saying, "Boy, they're not going to get their social security. Boy, they're not going to get this. Boy, they're not going to get that," give them something in the meantime, like information and knowledge. You're not willing to properly educate them, you fuck. You're going to worry about what it's going to be like for them in 30 years? Why not pass on the education? And they're the ones who give me hope, because they're the ones who've already lived through the ideas that many of those in the community, who are as old as I am, find abhorrent, like gay marriage. They're already way beyond that, and if a lot of those social issues can get out of the way, maybe we can move forward. So there's my hope. My hope is that we have children and hopefully they're smarter than we are.

In your comedy special you also say, after touring the country for 25 years, that "Many states shouldn't be states." What's the verdict on Oregon?

Oregon is not a state; it's its own island [laughs]. It's an island that isn't surrounded by water. You guys are all marching to a different drummer and you know it and that's why you're all there.

There's some big issues Oregon is facing with the November ballot coming up — one is to legalize recreational use of marijuana (Measure 91). Any thoughts?

I've been to Oregon enough that basically your reality is, whether you like it or not, you've legalized recreational marijuana. So if you want to have a vote on it, please be my guest. ... I kind of smoked myself out of marijuana. ... We really have to stop this and get on with the research. Doctors need to research the medicinal properties of marijuana. That's got to be done. It's patently absurd. If people are finding that it works, and they're stumbling on this on their own by trial and error, for Christ's sake, pay attention to it and don't give it to the pharmaceutical industry.

You've been doing stand up for a long time. What's your favorite thing to be mad about?

Stupidity, where it's just blatant stupidity. That's the thing that really gets me. Like what they're doing now with our response to Ebola and ISOL [the Islamic State] is just blatantly stupid ... It's like the elementary course in terms of being a human: You don't scare the shit out of people. ... But nothing gives me more happiness than when a political leader says something really stupid, that's my most joyous moment. ■

Lewis Black performs "The Rant is Due" 8 pm Thursday, Oct. 30, at the Hult Center; \$29.75-\$59.75, college student discounts available. Q&A has been edited for length and clarity. To read the full interview, visit eugeneweekly.com.

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